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The Trifecta Mainstreaming Holocaust Denial

The main thing extremists of the left and right, not to mention the Islamists, can agree on is that the Zionists are behind every evil, Israel is committing genocide and the Holocaust is, if not made up in whole or part, then at least exaggerated or exploited for the Jews' nefarious purposes.

By Kathleen Hayes

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Fourscore years. That's how long it's taken for the Holocaust to evolve from what almost everyone considered the exemplar of evil to a shibboleth that can be denied, minimized or mocked. Men and women with ginormous public platforms and expertise drawn from Wikipedia have discovered that nothing so assures greater celebrity as going after the Jews, and above all their most horrific suffering.

These self-made pundits remind their millions of followers on Spotify and YouTube that our government lied about COVID originating in a Chinese lab, about Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction, about Russian involvement in the 2016 presidential election — so what else are they lying about? The answer comes with dismal predictability: The Jews. The elites don't want you to know the Jews murdered JFK, are the hidden hand behind 9/11, that they operate a vast pedophilia ring. But the ultimate taboo, which these "brave" influencers will speak out about is the truth of the Holocaust. Far from harming them, their "revelations" assure a higher profile and greater status. Each is followed by ooh-I-can't-believe-he-said-that squeals and, above all, clicks. Antisemitism is a social media goldmine.

Dan Bilzerian (social media following: 32 million) told Piers Morgan a few months ago: "I believe that Jewish supremacy is the greatest threat to America, and I think it's the greatest threat to the world today." He says he would bet his vast fortune that the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was under 6 million, but in any case, "Jews have killed far more Christians than that. I mean it's not even close, if you look at the Bolshevik genocide, the Holodomor … they basically invented the genocide."

Candace Owens (social media following: 25 million) has gone Kanye West-level deranged, informing listeners on her YouTube channel that Frankists, a 19th-century cult founded by a Jewish apostate, are leading present-day pedophilia cabals, that AIPAC murdered JFK and that should anything happen to her, the Jews did it. She hasn't gotten around to full-bore Holocaust denial — yet — but mocks the horror surrounding it. Because we live in an age in which everyone

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Hitler is simply a bogeyman for the naive. In an episode titled "He Who Must Not Be Named" — "he" being Hitler — Owens mentions the Holocaust only to take potshots at it, claiming the well documented reports of Dr. Mengele's sadistic experiments are "absurd." Anyway, she says, the Allies did the same as the Nazis or worse.

It's this latter argument — we've committed monstrous crimes, so when our government declares someone an enemy, they're hypocrites and we shouldn't believe them — that resonates with people on the political left as well as right. And because our government and its allies have done some questionable if not terrible things throughout history, there is a need to reflect deeply on our predecessors' actions — to try to consider their circumstances as best we can, then ask where they might have gone wrong. But that would require reasoned, informed analysis and nuance — precisely the opposite approach of what these latter-day gurus are doing. Their argument isn't that the struggle against Nazism should be considered in less black-and-white terms — it's to turn reality on its head, declaring the good side evil, and implicitly exonerating what used to be rightly condemned.

Typical of our age's "experts" is self-styled historian Darryl Cooper, who has called Winston Churchill "the chief villain" — worse than Hitler — of the Second World War and tweeted that Hitler's invasion of France was "infinitely preferable in virtually every way" to wokeism. It's a message at least partially palatable to the far left, who love his take on Churchill and the murderous imperialist Allies.

But the main thing extremists of the left and right, not to mention the Islamists, can agree on is that the Zionists are behind every evil, Israel is committing genocide and the Holocaust is, if not made up in whole or part ("I don't think a single Jew died in gas chambers," podcaster Jake Shields tweeted), then at least exaggerated or exploited for the Jews' nefarious purposes.

> This week we mark Yom HaShoah, remembering the 6 million Jews… Simply remembering and upholding truth become acts of defiance. So we must.

Holocaust denial is nearly as old as the Holocaust itself — which is to say, it's very modern. Already by 1950, a French Communist, Paul Rassinier, had written a book doubting the existence of Auschwitz's gas chambers and the Nazis' policy of extermination. In 1959, American clergyman Gerald L. K. Smith published the claim that 6 million Jews were not killed during the Holocaust, but had peaceably immigrated to the United States during the war. Over

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others, Holocaust denialism. By 1989 Sweden-based Radio Islam introduced Islamist Holocaust denial to Europe, making the great trifecta — far left, far right and Islamist — complete. It's always been there, percolating on society's margins — although it does depend on what one considers "the margins."

Now, with the advent of social media, it's becoming mainstream. Not just widely discredited podcasters like Tucker Carlson, but largely respected ones like Piers Morgan, Theo Von, Stephen A. Smith and, above all, Joe Rogan are inviting on people with views that would have been scorned a few years ago but are now welcomed as daringly heterodox.

This creates a real dilemma. Free speech is essential to a free society. Calling to censor views that are disgusting but not immediately dangerous — meaning, explicitly calling for violence — is a big mistake that can only backfire. Podcasters like Rogan can make a legitimate-sounding claim that in providing a platform to these figures, they are simply championing free speech. But as Douglas Murray told Rogan during his recent appearance on Rogan's show: "I feel you've opened the door to quite a lot of people who've now got a very big platform, who have been throwing out counter-historical stuff of a very dangerous kind."

That about sums it up. This week we mark Yom HaShoah, remembering the 6 million Jews, including one million children, who were murdered in the Holocaust. Meanwhile we can't help but think of the Jews murdered on Oct. 7, those still being held hostage, and the tsunami of antisemitism directed against the state founded with the vow "Never Again." Simply remembering and upholding truth have become acts of defiance. So we must.

Kathleen Hayes *is the author of "Antisemitism and the Left: A Memoir."*

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